

School for Housewives

by Marion Harland

Christmas in the Home



Attractive Way to Serve Sandwiches



Simple and Graceful Centerpiece



Hiding Gifts



Home Made Christmas Garland

THE keynote of Christmas in the home should be joy. Of no other festival is this as true as of this great feast.

Thanksgiving calls for gratitude, Easter for hope, the various national holidays demand sensations of patriotism, but at Christmas we should feel, everywhere and always, joy.

Our fathers sang to the tune of good old Antioch on Christmas mornings, "Joy to the world!" Let us sing it in our hearts and live it in the home.

This joy is not dependent upon outward circumstances or conditions. It is of the heart, but, as from the heart spring the motives of our actions, this time should be one of joyful faces and happy deeds.

It may be true to say that the mother is the heart and soul of the home, but repetition does not lessen the truth of the statement. She is also the mental or spiritual barometer of the household by which the domestic weather is registered.

Demand Happiness.

If she points to "fair," there will be sunshine.

As she is also the queen of the American home, let her decree and demand happiness at this holiday season.

All decorations should indicate the spirit of the day of days.

And, as the joy is genuine, let the decorations be real.

Avoid tinsel, paper flowers, and ornaments, artificial gewgaws of all kinds. Select, instead, evergreen boughs, glistening holly, and the always beautiful mistletoe. Let the children or young people make a pilgrimage to the woods and bring home armfuls of cedar boughs and of ground pine or running cedar.

One of the most effectively decorated rooms I have ever seen was in a country cottage. Yet the expense of these decorations was not great. From the nearby town were ordered the holly wreaths for the three windows and a few sprays of holly to be used among the cedar boughs.

There was also a clump of mistletoe. This was hung from the chandelier in the center of the room, and the chandelier itself was swathed in ground pine or running cedar.

This, as well as what they called "stacks" of evergreen boughs, was brought by the boys of the family from the woods.

The four corners of the room were banded from floor to ceiling with masses of evergreen, and the space between the mantelshelf and ceiling was filled in the same manner.

Outlined in Green.

The picture frames were twined with running cedar, and festoons of this ran along the picture molding.

Here and there, in the mass of green over the fireplace, shone bits of holly with scarlet berries. Each window casing was outlined by green strings of ground pine.

In the center of the room was the small Christmas tree, upon a table just large enough to hold it comfortably. On this were hung the gifts intended for the various members of the family.

There were also tiny candles, which were lighted at the moment when the doors into the room were thrown open to the expectant little ones.

A tree in some form large or small, is, in some families, almost a necessity.

This is especially true where there are children.

Just why a tree which attracts hardly more than a few minutes' notice should be a subject of such joy to children is one of those mysteries the explanation to which we forget when we put away childish things. But the fact remains that the average child wants a tree.

Luckily, it is also true that he does not demand a large one. So long as there is enough of it to call it a "Christmas tree," the small boy or girl is satisfied.

This is especially fortunate for the flat dweller, as in many apartment parlors the admission of a large tree would mean the exclusion of all but one beholder at a time.

City florists, appreciating this fact, keep on hand a number of little trees.



Making Holly and Laurel Wreaths



der, and the various courses follow in proper sequence, and are enjoyed accordingly.

Quality Comes First.

If one can have only two courses, let each dish be the best of its kind—the turkey done to a turn, the vegetables properly cooked and well seasoned, and

the mince pies of flaky crust, in which butter, not lard, plays a prominent part. If there must be a choice between quality and quantity, let quantity go by the board.

As the form is worth little without the spirit, so the joyous spirit of Christmas must be back of everything.

In the table talk, in the conversation throughout the day, there must be nothing disagreeable introduced.

If one is not "in the spirit" on this "the Lord's day," let one seem to be, that painful fancies or disagreeable thoughts may not be communicated to others, and thus their joy be marred.

An excellent way in which to banish sad or bitter musings is to allow no room for them; that is, to fill the mind so full of thought of the happiness of others that there remains no thought for one's self.

Unfortunately there is often in the home a reaction that sets in after the day's celebration is about over, which gives rise to irritability, depression and sometimes peevishness not only among the children, but with their elders also.

The Housemothers' Exchange

PERHAPS I may help "Mrs. D." of Niagara Falls, in her perplexity over the current loaf.

I make one about once a week, and have good luck always. She does not say whether or not she puts her fruit and shortening in the first "raising."

If she does that it will retard the rising. I put half the sugar in at first. The quantity should be according to how sweet she would like to have the loaf. I use but half a cupful of sugar and a scant half cupful of shortening to one loaf. The rest of the sugar and shortening, together with the well-dredged fruit, goes in when I work it into a stiffer dough, after the first raising.

It requires a steady oven and not too hot.

I read the Exchange with pleasure and profit. I have not yet read in it a recipe for bread as I make it. Mine always "turns out well," as the old housewives phrase it.

I use the water in which peeled potatoes are boiled but none of the potato—adding while it is hot a generous cupful of sugar. This is for three pinches of recipe for bread as I make it. Mine always "turns out well," as the old housewives phrase it.

All the glassware and china must be the daintiest that the housemother owns. As this day celebrates the gift of gifts, let all that we offer to those whom we love be of our best, and let no trouble be spared to make everything beautiful.

The day when the Christmas dinner meant a "feed," when the table groaned beforehand, and the eaters afterward, is, fortunately for our self-respect, digestion, and esthetic taste, a thing of the past.

Now all is done decently and in order.

stiffen with more flour, and when the dough has risen high I divide into loaves, brush the tops with sweet milk and let them stand in a tolerably warm place until very light. I bake them one hour.

My bread is sweet and moist, and has a flavor which potato bread or that in which lard is used never has.

Now for my petition.

I wish to know how to get rid of big black ants in kitchen and pantry. All the remedies for the trouble of which I have read in our valuable Corner have proved total failures, namely borax, salt, kerosene, tansy, pennyroyal, insect powder, and sticky fly-paper.

Mrs. L. H. (Red Wing, Minn.)

I insert your letter the more cheerfully because of a request from a young housekeeper for just such directions as you give for bread making. I trust she will read them carefully and comprehend that I am answering her letter.

As to the peculiarly obstinate breed of ants that make your busy, cleanly life a burden, try tartar emetic and syrup.

Blend the poisonous powder with sugar and water, or with maple syrup, and put into small saucers. Set these on the shelves out of the children's reach, and in the track of the marauders.

They will eat and die! Some housewives soak bits of sponge in the deadly sweet, and when the ants are thick upon them, drop the sponges into boiling water.

To Remove Rust From Steel.

I have a steel bag which is badly

To avoid this it is well to plan some little pleasure for the evening of Christmas day; something that, as one boy says, will "let them down easy." Some treat, such as a concert or the theater or an informal supper, is excellent.

In one family, where twenty-one sat down to the noonday Christmas dinner, there was a sort of parlor picnic planned for Christmas night.

Sandwiches and cakes were brought to the parlors by the children, and the older people were waited on by the youngsters, who, after the "pick-up supper" was over, gave a little entertainment which they had prepared among themselves—songs, recitations, and declamations—at which performance the older people were the audience.

It amused the children, and, in thinking of them, the older ones forgot the ennui that is too often the sequence of the great holiday.

Chestnut Dressing for Turkey.

Select the large Italian chestnuts. Cover a quart of these with boiling salted water, and when cooked drain, and shell them.

Put into a wooden bowl and mash smooth with a potato-beetle, moistening with two tablespoonfuls of butter, and salt and pepper to taste.

Oyster Dressing for Turkey.

Drain the liquor from twenty oysters and chop them very fine. Rub smooth enough dry bread crumbs to make a pint, season with salt and pepper and moisten with a little melted butter and some oyster liquor.

Put into a wooden bowl and mash smooth with a potato-beetle, moistening with two tablespoonfuls of butter, and salt and pepper to taste.

White Fruit Cake.

Rub together to a light cream three-quarters of a cup of butter and one and one-half cups of powdered sugar.

When very light, add a half gill of milk and three teaspoonfuls of prepared flour. Have ready mixed and well dredged with flour a half pound of cleaned currants, a half pound of seeded and halved raisins, three tablespoonfuls of shredded citron and three tablespoon-

ful of shelled, blanched, and chopped almonds.

Stir this fruit lightly into the batter, add a gill of brandy and bake in loaf-tins lined with greased paper.

When the sugar has melted pour into a mold wet with cold water and set aside to form. The jelly should be stiff enough to turn out and retain its shape.

Cranberry Jelly.

Wash a quart of cranberries, put them, still wet, into a double boiler and cook until very soft. Squeeze through a jelly bag, return to the fire, and sweeten abundantly.

When the sugar has melted pour into a mold wet with cold water and set aside to form. The jelly should be stiff enough to turn out and retain its shape.

Wash and pick over a quart of cranberries and put them into the inner vessel of a double boiler, filling the outer vessel with boiling water. Cover closely and cook steadily until the cranberries are broken and soft.

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